GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3079
ANSWERED ON:05.09.2007
TIGER TASK FORCE REPORT
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(d) whether the Tiger Task Force and the National Forest Commission have suggested that the forest cadre be strengthened to protect wildlife and the green cover which according to Forest Survey of India's report, has gone down in quality over the past decade as reported in the Hindustan Times dated June 18, 2007;

(e) if so, the details thereof and other suggestions made by Tiger Task Force and National Forest Commission;

(f) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard; and

(g) the other measures taken by the Government for tiger conservation as well as for captive breeding and propagation of the endangered species?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY)

(a) & (b) The Tiger Task Force and the National Forest Commission have made several recommendations for strengthening tiger and forest conservation respectively, which interalia, include strengthening of professional expertise and providing basic facilities to forest field staff.

(c) While the urgent recommendations of the Tiger Task Force are being implemented, the report of the National Forest Commission has been examined for needful action by the Centre and States.

(d) There is no proposal for captive breeding of tigers. The steps taken by the Government for tiger conservation are at Annexure-I.

ANNEXURE-I

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3079 ON TIGER TASK FORCE REPORT DUE FOR REPLY ON 5.09.2007.

The steps taken by the Government for tiger conservation are as below:- Legal steps

1. Amendment of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for providing enabling provisions for constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau. The punishment in cases of offence within a tiger reserve has been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that has been used for committing any wild life offence.

Administrative steps

2. Strengthening of antipoaching activities, including special strategy for monsoon patrolling, by providing funding support to Tiger Reserve States, as proposed by them, for deployment of antipoaching squads involving ex-army personnel / home guards, apart from workforce comprising of local people, in addition to strengthening of communication / wireless facilities.

3. Constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority with effect from 4.09.2006, for strengthening tiger conservation by, interalia, ensuring normative standards in tiger reserve management, preparation of reserve specific tiger conservation plan, laying down annual / audit report before Parliament, constituting State level Steering Committees under the Chairmanship of Chief Ministers and establishment of Tiger Conservation Foundation.

4. Constitution of a multidisciplinary Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) with effect from 6.6.2007 comprising of officers from Police, Forest, Customs and other enforcement agencies to effectively control illegal trade in wildlife.

5. In principle approval accorded for declaring eight new Tiger Reserves.

Financial steps

6. Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz. Project Tiger and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

International Cooperation

7. India has a Memorandum of Understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocol on tiger conservation with China.

8. A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

9. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at The Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, which contains directions to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming, and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.